ly. I think this question was even in the Consultative Committee meetings on one or two occasions. The answer given was that there are cooperative societies to look after the storage facilities. Most of the villages have got cooperative societies and the cooperative societies have got their own storage facilities. Once the hon. Minister—I think it was Mr. Bhagat — promised that he would be implementing the farmers' extension scheme in the Central Warehousing Corporation. As my friend was pointing out, it would have been possible for the farmers to get this facility if that scheme had been implemented, but as far as my knowledge goes that scheme has not so far been implemented. If that is implemented, it would have been of some help to the farmers. Everybody knows that the farmers have to resort to distress sale because at the time of harvest they do not have proper storage facilities. So our Minister should think about it. It was promised in the Consultative Committee meeting that a scheme like the farmers' extension scheme would be implemented through the Central Warehousing Corporation. The second point that I have to raise is about damages. The present storage facilities are not proper As a result there are damages. I do not want to go into the details quoting incidents. You can find so many incidents appearing in newspapers everyday about what is happening in UP, Madhya Pradesh or in other States. It is a serious matter and it requires serious attention by the Government. Second reason for the damages is bad management. Because of these two major reasons so much damage is taking place in so many places for storage.

The third point is that a number of private institutions are coming up like mushrooms. In their operations they do not follow any proper regulations. I am not suggesting you nationalise all these private institutions, but my point is that because of lack of storage facilities in the public sector corporations, they are compelled to approach these private institutions, which are not guided by any of the regulations. As a result of this a big exploitation goes on there. So, I would request the hon. Minister that as early as possible a legislation must be thought of to prevent this type 5.00 P.M. of exploitation. We know that you cannot give cold storage facilities to a large number of farmers in the country. So private sector may have to operate for some more time. There is an urgent need for a legislation on that sphere. This is an exploiting sector and the Government should enter into this field to put an end to this sort of exploitation. I do not want to tell the story as to how they are exploited because this news already appeared in the newspapers. This is very important and the Government should take immediate steps. This is the only suggestion I wanted to make. Thank you.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI H. HANUMANTHAPPA): Shri Brahm Dutt the Minister of State for Petroleum and Natural gas will make a statement.

STATEMENT BY MINISTER

Fire Incident in Mahul Refinery of Bharat Petroleum Corporation

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI BRAHM DUTT): Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, a fire occurred at Bharat Petroleum Corporation's Bombay (Mahul) refinery on 9-11-1988 about 12.00 Noon in the loading area of the refinery. The fire spread to the aromatic plant of the refinery. The fire was extinguished in the loading area but the naptha in the storage tanks of the aromatic plant continued to burn. Five tanks in all caught fire.

Forty-six people working mostly in gantry area were injured and were hospitalised. Most of them were contract labourers. While three persons died on the spot, by November 14th the number dead had reached thirty. Now, I may add that the latest figure is thirty-one. The condition of ten is stated to be critical. All

[Shri Braham Dutt]

the injured are being treated in several hospitals of Bombay city. The refinery authorities have been asked to announce ex-gratia payment of Rs. 10,000 per head for deceased and Rs. 5000/- for seriously injured.

Three storage tanks have been almost destroyed and another two tanks have been seriously damaged. The pump house mainly used for loading benzene and toluene has been burnt out completely. Six lorries owned by a contractor, filled with bitumen drums and other products have been completely or partiallly destroyed. One company car was destroyed.

Aside from the disruption in production of benzene and toluene, preliminary estimates of loss are put at approximately around Rs. 150 lakhs.

On receipt of information, Government deputed the Chief of the Safety Directorate under the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas to BPCL to assist the refinery authorities in putting out the fire. Government have also constituted a high-powered committee of experts, headed by the Chief of the Oil Industry Safety Directorate to enquire into the cause of fire and suggest remedial measures to prevent recurrence of the same.

The refinery has brought back into operation its catalytic cracking unit on 11-11-1988. The crude disillation column was expected to be operated on 16-11-1988. Steps have been taken to ensure that there is no disruption in essential supplies.

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY (Pondicherry): Mr Vice-Chairman Sir, I have gone through the statement of the hon. Minister. The statement says that an enquiry committee has been constituted. There are two versions about the fire. The first is about the sabotage and the second one is about the vapour cloud being ignited. May I know from the hon. Minister what was the report of the preliminary investigation on the fire accident. In fact the third theory is that the welding work was allowed to be done there. These versions have been reported in the press. The estimated loss is reported to be Rs. 1.5 crores. The death toll has risen from 10 to 31. In order to put out the fire, foam has to be used but in this case, water was used by the fire fighting officers, and foam was not used. Therefore, there was delay in putting out the fire. Another information that I would like to have from the hon. Minister is whether those persons who were working in the Bharat Petroleum Corporation and who were brave enough to put off the fire that was spreading to the other tankers and consequently the fire could not spread to other areas, have been identified by the department and whether the Ministry is giving them award. Otherwise, the fire should have spread to other areas and the damage should have been much more. Another important aspect is that in 1965, there was one fire and now in 1988, a major fire took place in that particularly refinery. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether the loss which has been sustained by this accident which has taken place in Naphtha storage could have been avoided. Further, I would like to know about the cause of the fire which has been reported in the preliminary investigation. With this, I conclude.

SHRI SUKOMAL SEN (West Bengal): Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, it is a very brief statement. Much more has come out in the newspapers. It is a very serious affair leading to so many deaths of workers whether it is contract labour or regular labour and many are injured and the condition of many more is critical. I would like to know from the hon. Minister how this fire broke out in the refinery. He may not tell us the details of the cause but how the fire broke out, we would like to know. He did not tell us anything about it. We would like to know whether the fire occured due to electrical failure or it was an accident. What are the causes of this fire as it appeared from the immediate enquiry? Then, Sir, in every factory particularly, the petroleum refinery,

they are required to maintain some fire preventive measures according to some statute. I would like to know whether those statutory fire preventive measures were adopted by the Corporation authorities. Then, before the contractors are allowing the workers to work there, whether the contractors are sure that the workers will be safe from any fire hazard or whether they are contract labour and the contractor without caring for the safety of the workers ask them to go to dangerous zone. Then, Sir, it is mentioned here that most of the workers are contract labour. What does he mean by 'most'? How many of them are regular workers in the Corporation and how many of them are contract labour? This was the vital information which we require but the Minister has not given us that information. Then, Sir, this enquiry that has been set up, whether they have fixed any time schedule for the completion of the enquiry. Otherwise, how the Government is going to fix the responsibility of the authorities who are responsible for this fire? Further, I would like to know whether any callousness or neglect has led to this fire that has taken a heavy toll of lives, that is a very pertinent issue. When this enquiry is going to be completed, that too, I would like to know from the hon. Minister.

SHRI CHITTA BASU (West Bengal): Sir, the statement says that most of the workers were contract labour. Sir, oil industry, in our country is highly organised and one of the major industries in our country. Sir, I have got some personal experience about this contract labour in oil industry. It is not only in Bharat Petroleum Corporation but particularly in ONGC, a very huge percentage of workers are still contract labour. Sir, the contract labour are generally employed or generally allowed to be employed in that particular area of the activity of the factory or the plant where there is perennial work. If it is seasonal work then contract labour might be employed. But here, in the oil industry, such a highly organised industry, highly sophisticated industry we find that a very large chunk of the employees are employed under the contract labour system. Sir the House is quite well aware of the fact that Parliament has passed a law for the regulation of contract labour and it is expected of the public sector industry that the laws and the regulations flowing therefrom are honestly and sincerely adhered to by the public sector management. Now I want to know whether these contract labour were employed under the strict parameters of the Contract Labour Act. What were the obligations on the part of the contractor and is it necessary for that particular plant to employ contract labour? Sir my allegation is that most of the regulations of the contract labour law have been violated in this particular instance. I want to know from the hon. Minister whether they will look into the entire question of employment of contract labour in the oil industry and whether they will see that contract labour is abolished particularly in those areas where the nature of work is not seasonal but perennial. Will the hon. Minister kindly set up some kind of a committee on behalf of the Government itself to see that contract labour is abolished and they are not allowed to be employed in public sector industries, particularly in the oil industry? The second point which I want.....

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI H. HANUMANTHAPPA): You have taken four minutes.

SHRI CHITTA BASU: So what?

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI H. HANUMANTHAPPA): In the clarification you are discussing the labour policy. Please be brief.

SHRI CHITTA BASU: As I have mentioned earlier it is a highly sophisticated industry. Now, this particular unit is exposed to this kind of accidents because it deals with oil and other inflammable material. Was the refinery well-equipped to fight this kind of fire which is generally expected and if not so, were there deficiencies in the safety measures in this particular plant?

SHRI GHULAM RASOOL MATTO (Jammu and Kashmir): Mr. Vice-Chair-

[Shri Ghulam Rasool Matto]

man. Sir, I share the feelings of the Minister on the tragedy and the deaths that have taken place in this refinery. I wish to convey through you our grief to the bereaved families. Sir, I have got a report which may be untrue. The Minisister will kindly reply. The report is that in almost all our refineries, modern fire safety equipment are not installed. The Safety equipment installed are 25 years old. This is point No. 1. The second thing that has come to my notice is that the technology used in the fire-extinguishing equipment in our refineries is 25 years old. I would like to know from the Minister about this not as a matter of criticism but as a matter of caution. If it is a fact that our fire safety equipment, our fire extinguishing equipment, is old and out-dated, we should send some of our officers to most modern refineries and find out what their latest technology is in this sphere. I am told in America and certain other developed countries it is impossible that in any refinery there may be a fire under modern conditions. I would like to know whether our fire safety measures our fire extinguishing measures are according to the latest international standards.

With regard to the ex-gratia payment of Rs. 10,000, this is such a small amount for death. I would request the Minister kindly to consider whether he can raise the compensation to the level that is given in the case of other accidents where we pay a huge amount. I can understand he will say it is only ex-gratia. But still may invite him to use his benevolence in increasing it to a sizeable amount, not less than Rs. 30,000 per person dead.

My third and last point: I have not been able to understand why contract labour has been employed in an important industry like the refinery. Contract labour should be done away with. In the meantime, if contract labour is employed, I have a hunch. I know some Labour Acts, what the contractors do is since any person employed for more than 240 days automatically becomes permanent, after 200 days or 230 days they change the name of that person, say, from Hanumanthappa to Ghulam Rasool Matto. The person remains the same but he is shown under a different name so that he continues to be a casual labour and never becomes permanent. So I request the Minister to go deep into the matter and assure this House that the system of contract labour will be done away with and there will be permanent employees doing whatever job is being done now in the refineries.

PROF. SOURENDRA BHATTACHARJEE (West Bengal): Firstly I request the Minister kindly to explain the safety devices in the refinery, whether they were adequate. This is the first point to be gone into. In many places it is because of a lapse in this regard that fire breaks out. Especially this is a very inflammable industry; it goes without saying. I request the Minister to explain a particular portion in the first paragraph of his statement where he said:

> "The fire was extinguished in the loading area but the naphtha in the storage tanks of the aromatic plant continued to burn."

It seems perhaps the fire in the storage tanks was overlooked in the beginning but it was found out later on. Was it something like that? The sequence is not at all clear. From the statement it appears there was a gap or there was a lapse.

Regarding compensation it is stated that the Government asked Bharat Petroleum to announce so much of compensation. This reminds me of only one line of a poem I had read in my student days in school: "Oh God, life is so cheap, blood so dear." So, blood is now cheap in the Sovereign, Democratic, Socialist Republic of India. But let me hope that it is not the final instalment, but it is only the first instalment. The amount should be augmented. Let the Government take its own decision, either on the basis of the proposal of Mr. Matto or otherwise.

The last point that I would submit is regarding the inquiry that has been instituted by the Directorate of Safety of Bharat

Petroleum. It is they who are in the dock now because the Safety Directorate is responsible for the safety devices or rather should be responsible for the safety devices. So, some neutral agency—Bharat Petroleum and the ONGC are parts of the same Ministry—or a different Ministry at least, say, the Labour Ministry whose Safety Inspectors are there and some higher officials also should be associated with the inquiry and they should be entrusted with the task of the inquiry because the Safety Directorate will have to explain whether there were any lapses or not. Thank you, Sir.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI H. HANUMANTHAPPA): Yes, Mr. Subramanian Swamy.

SHRI SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY (Uttar Pradesh): Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, I represented in the Lok Sabha for two terms this area and I know it, I know this refinery area extremely well and I am really surprised at the rather casual way in which.....

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI H. HANUMANTHAPPA): I hope you were not responsible for it having known all these details.....(*Interruptions*)...

SHRI GHULAM RASOOL MATTO: He is not a saboteur...(*Interruptions*)...

SHRI MIRZA IRSHADBAIG (Gujarat): I want to congratulate you....(*Interruptions*)...

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI H. HANUMANTHAPPA): Please leave it at that. It is all in a lighter vein.

SHRI MIRZA IRSHADBAIG: You have come to the front seat?...(*Interruptions*)...

SHRI SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY: Sir, they do not know the parliamentary procedure. I am here today representing my party . All right? When the leader is not there, I am here. So, don't make any frivolous remarks. These are silly remarks. Sir, they should educate their Members...(*Interruptions*)...

SHRI MIRZA IRSHADBAIG: Sir, may I have your permission to interrupt him?...(*Interruptions*)...

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI H. HANUMANTHAPPA): It is all in a lighter vein. Don't say anything now.

SHRI MIRZA IRSHADBAIG: Sir, I want a clarification because he is blaming me...(*Interruptions*)...

SHRI N. E. BALARAM (Kerala): When the Chair does not object, it means it goes. You have been in this House for so many years and you should know it. Otherwise the Chair would have objected to it...(*Interruptions*)...

SHRI SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY: Sir, Congressmen are now making only frivolous remarks. They are not interested in serious debates. I have seen the quality of the debate that is going on. Such a serious matter is here. But these thirty or so Members are raising silly questions. I am a member of a party and when the leader is not here, I have the right to stand up and speak...(*Interruptions*)...

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY: The remarks you made you should make outside the House and no there...(*Interruptions*)...

SHRI SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY: Sir, please ask him to sit down...(*Interruptions*).

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI H. HANUMANTHAPPA): Don't direct the Chair....(*Interruptions*)...

SHRI SUBAMANIAN SWAMY: I am only asking you, only telling you, "Please ask them to sit down."..(*Interruptions*)...

SHRI VISHWA BANDHU GUPTA (Delhi): Sir I am on a point of order. Sir, although Mr. Swamy is the only Swamy here, he is very friendly with me and, therefore, I can take the liberty of asking him...(*Interruptions*)...

AN HON. MEMBER: There is Mr. Narayanasamy also...(*Interruptions*)...

SHRI VISHWA BANDHU GUPTA: But Swamy is only one. Now, in this kind of a debate, when both sides are very friendly and when words are exchanged and interruptions take place can we go to extent of saying that these are not serious debates? A serious debate can take place only with some interruptions and Mr. Swamy himself on many many occasions has taken recourse to this. So, Mr. Swamy, would you say that this is a serious debate or that this is a non-serious debate?

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI H. HANUMANTHAPPA): No point of order.

SHRI SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY: I only make interruptions on substantive points.

When the Union Carbide incident took place, the Government justifiably held the entire management responsible. There also an incident of this kind took place. Of course, the casualties were much higher and the facts were much wider. But knowing this area intimately, I would say that the people of that area have always been apprehensive that such a thing was going to happen. Therefore, I would like to know, why the Government has taken it so lightly? Sir, there is some Safety Directorate going to inquire into this, etc. etc. I would like the Government to appoint some authority at high-power level so that we get to know what is going on, why this has happened. So this is the first point I would like the Minister to answer.

The second thing, as has been pointed out by many of the speakers, is that 46 people working there were injured and hospitalised, and they say that most of them are contract labourers. I have found out by telephone that most of the workers in that refinery are contract labourers. The proportion of contract labour is steadily increasing. According to my information, the compensation that is being paid or is purported to be paid is so far only for those who are regular employees. The contract labour there has yet to get anything. So I would like the Government to come out specifically and clearly and tell us whether this compensation is announced for all the employees and how they are going to reach the families of the deceased. Some of them are on daily wage basis; some of them have been employed through some local 'dadas'. So how are they going to ensure that it is going to reach the families?

Sir, there are a number of people in Bombay. Bombay is a city of 'dhandha' as they say. Everybody has something or the other going. A substantial number of the people are having trucks for loading. Trucks of those who own one or two trucks have been burnt... (*Time Bell rings*) And there is no provision here for compensating them. They are not big truck-owners or something. They are the people who are not even insured.

Finally, I would like to know from the Government whether they intend to set up a regular deep-seated study on this problem, because it is not only the Bharat Petroleum refinery but a number of other refineries in the country are not paying sufficient attention to this fire hazard problem. What is the Government proposing to do about it?

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI H. HANUMANTHAPPA): Before I call the next Member, I want to request hon. Members that speaking from the other seats may be exceptional and it should not be a general practice. Let it not be raised every time that so and so is not speaking from his seat. I request Members as far as possible to be in their seats. It should only be an exception, and that took with the permission that they can speak from other seats.

Dr. Sivaji.

DR. YELAMANCHILI SIVAJI (Andhra Pradesh): I will go to my seat and speak. (*Interruptions*)

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI H. HANUMANTHAPPA): Please. That is why I announced it before. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY: Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, the problem is quite different. When the leader is not there, somebody has to look after the party. There is a roster duty and we have to look after it.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI H. HANUMANTHAPPA): That should be with the knowledge of the Chair.

SHRI SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY: It is a standing rule.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI H. HANUMANTHAPPA): Whatever it be, it should be with the knowledge of the Chair.

SHRI SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY: You should know the standing rules of Parliament.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI H. HANUMANTHAPPA): You are right; I am also right.

DR. YELAMANCHILI SHIVAJI: Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, as per the reports, the flames continued for 28 hours. I would like to know why tanks with inflammable chemicals are kept around these places. During the last few months it is the second fire accident in the same vicinity of refineries. A few months back the Hindustan Petroleum refinery that is away only by one kilometre from this point caught fire and even though was no loss of life due to continuing flames and fire, there was a heavy damage. What steps are being taken out of the past experience? And the newspapers of the 11th stated that the casualties were 20. The Minister stated in the other house day before yesterday that the casualties were 31. And I am sorry to state that the Minister repeated the same statement here. It appears that the officials of the Ministry cyclostyled some 1,000 copies and circulated them both in Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha. The same statement which he offered in the Lok Sabha on the 15th is repeated here. I don't mind it. But what is the fate of those 10 people that are hospitalised and whose condition was reported to be sinking? Are they recovering in these last two days or are they sinking or are there any more casualties? I want to know this from the hon. Minister.

Sir, several Members mentioned about the compensation issue. The ONGC is paying a very huge amount or more than Rs. 800 crores as corporate tax, if I remember correctly. And why do they not spare some more money to pay some more compensation?

Sir, it is reported in the Minister's statement that the crude distillation column is expected to be operated on the 16th November. Is it operating today or not, I would like to know from the hon. Minister. Thank you, Sir.

SHRIMATI BIJOYA CHAKRAVARTY (Assam): Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, the fire at the Bharat Petroleum refinery at Mahul in Bombay is probably one of the worst type of industrial disasters in the country. And it is more unfortunate that even after nine days of the accident, we are getting half-baked and unsatisfactory report in a very casual manner from the Minister concerned. I want to know from the Minister whether it is a fact that the management wanted to do a record production in the aromatic plant which ultimately led to the fire.

Secondly, Sir, probably the Minister is not aware of the fact that there is a long-standing dispute between the management and the labour since 1976. Is it true that prolonged strike and lock-out there led to operational problems which probebly caused the leakage in the furnace that led to the fire?

Thirdly, Sir, from the newspaper reports and from our persona lcontract we have come to know that the number of deaths is more than 30. And from the Minister's statement, we are getting the number as 3..

PROF. SOURENDRA BHATTACHARJEE: 31.

SHRIMATI BIJOYA CHAKRAVARTY: I would like to know from the Minister the exact number of casualities. Thank you, Sir.

श्री अश्विनी कुमार (बिहार) : माननीय उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदय, मंत्री महोदय ने जो वक्तव्य दिया है उसमें यह वर्णन किया है कि यह जो आग लगी यह लोडिंग एरिया में लगी। इसका अर्थ है कि रिफाइनरी से बाहर जहां फिनिश्ड प्रोडक्ट गाड़ियों में लोड किया जा रहा था वहां यह आग लगी और कितना माल प्रति दिन लोड होगा यह एक निश्चित धारणा है जो कि रिफाइनरी में होनी चाहिए। रिफाइनरी परमानेंट टाइप आफ जाब है, आक्ज़ीलियरी काम नहीं है। जितने लोग घायल हुए वे ठेकेदार के आदमी थे रेगुलर एम्प्लायीज नहीं थे। इसके बारे में मेरे मित्रों ने प्रश्न पूछे और उसके साथ यह पूछा है कि वहां जो लारीज वगैरह थी उसके कम्पेनसेशन के बारे में क्या कर रहे हैं। जानकारी प्राप्त करने के लिए मेरा दूसरा प्रश्न है कि जब ऐसी दुर्घटना हुई तो आपने यहां से एक चीफ आफ द सेफ्टी डाइरेक्टर को डिप्यूट किया। मैं मंत्री महोदय से जानना चाहूंगा कि आग लगने के कितने घंटे के बाद डिप्यूट किया, क्यों डिप्यूट किया गया और डिप्यूट करने के क्या यह अर्थ थे कि फैक्ट्री के अंदर जो भी फायर फाइटिंग अधिकारी थे वे अक्षम थे, इसलिए यहां से व्यक्ति भेजा गया? अगर वे सक्षम थे तो यहां से भेजने की क्या आवश्यकता थी और अगर अक्षम थे तो उनकी क्या आवश्यकता है। इसको जरा एक्सप्लेन करें और यह भी कि उसने वहां जाकर क्या किया?

तीसरा, जो अन्य माननीय सदस्यों ने प्रश्न उठाया है मैं उस पर बल दूंगा कि जब किसी भी इस प्रकार के संयंत्र में दुर्घटना होती है तो उसकी जांच ऐसे अधिकारियों से कराई जाती है जो उससे सम्बद्ध है और स्वाभाविक है कि वे उसकी लीपापोती करने में ज्यादा इंटरेस्टेड होंगे और आज तक की जितनी ऐसी इन्क्वायरीज की रिपोर्ट आई है उनसे पता लगेगा कि किसी मजदूर ने नल खोल दिया था जिसके कारण यह हुआ और उनके लिए कोई अधिकारी जिम्मेदार नहीं ठहराया जाता है। यह अधिकारियों की साठगाठ होती है। मेरा निवेदन यह होगा कि अगर एक निष्पक्ष जांच इसकी कराने के लिए मंत्री महोदय तैयार होंगे तो वह इसके लिए ज्यादा अच्छा होगा। मेरा तीसरा प्रश्न यह है कि जो लेबरर्ज़ घायल हैं और एक के बाद एक मरते चले जा रहे हैं, अस्पताल में उनकी देखभाल क्या सरकार कर रही है या रिफाइनरी कर रही है या जिस ठेकेदार के पास वह काम कर रहे थे, उसकी मर्ज़ पर उनको छोड़ दिया गया है? क्योंकि ठेकेदार को तो केवल काम करवाया और उसके बाद छोड़ देना, डेली लेबरर्ज़ के साथ उसका तो कोई नाता-रिश्ता नहीं है। क्या ऐसी दुर्घटना में सरकार ने जो कांट्रेक्ट लेबर से काम करवा रहे थे, हास्पिटेलाईज़ होने के बाद उनका ज़िम्मा अपने ऊपर लिया है? क्या सरकार उनकी देखभाल कर रही है, अन्य व्यवस्था कर रही है और जो मर गये है, जो एक के बाद एक मरते गये, उनके शव-दाह इत्यादि के लिए क्या किया है? उसके लिए तात्कालिक व्यवस्था क्या की है क्योंकि बहुत से लेबरर्ज़ ऐसे होते है जो अपने परिवार से अलग आकर यहां रहते है।

चौथी बात मैं अंत में जानना चाहूंगा कि सरकार इसकी क्या व्यवस्था करेगी कि जो भी फाईनल पेमेंट होंगी, जोकि सम्मानजनक होगी एक भारतीय के जान-माल के हिसाब से, उसको उसके आश्रितों तक पहुंचाने की क्या व्यवस्था करेगी?

श्री ईश दत्त यादव (उत्तर प्रदेश) : माननीय उपसभाध्यक्ष जी, 9-12-88 को जो माहुल रिफाइनरी में दुर्भाग्यपूर्ण घटना हुई है, यह बहुत ही चिंता का विषय है।

मान्यवर, इस देश में घटनायें बराबर हो रही है। अभी पिछले महीने दो वायुयान की दुर्घटनायें हुई, भोपाल गैस त्रासदी हुई, वगैरह-वगैरह और यह जो सरकार के विभाग में दुर्घटनायें हो रही हैं, उससे इस देश की आम जनता के मन में यह धारणा बन रही है कि सरकार सही व्यवस्था नहीं कर पा रही है;

सरकार का प्रशासन लुंज-पुंज है और इस कारण से घटनायें हो रही है।

माननीय मंत्री जी का जो बयान है, यह केंद्र सरकार का बयान है और बड़ी जिम्मेदारी का यह बयान होना चाहिए। मंत्री जी ने इस सदन में जो बयान दिया है, यह कोई बयान नहीं है। यह तो समाचार-पत्र का बयान है, दुर्घटना 9 तारीख को हुई, रिफाइनरी में हुई, इतने मरे, इतने घायल हुए। मैं माननीय मंत्री जी से जानना चाहूंगा कि आपके विभाग में इस तरह की भयंकर घटना घटी, क्या माननीय मंत्री जी भी मौके पर गये या मंत्री जी ने इसके बारे में अब तक कोई स्वयं जानकारी प्राप्त की है और अब तक की जो माननीय मंत्री जी की जानकारी है इस दुर्घटना के कारण की, मैं चाहूंगा कि माननीय मंत्री जी इस माननीय सदन में उसको रखेंगे क्या ?

इस घटना के पीछे कोई साजिश या षडयंत्र भी हो सकता है। इस तरह की भी जानकारी मैं माननीय मंत्री जी से चाहूंगा। अंत में यह बड़े उपहास का बयान है मंत्री जी का कि जो मर गया है, जिसकी जीवन लीला समाप्त हो गई है, उसको दस हजार रुपये देंगे और जो घायल है उसको पांच हजार देंगे। मैं कहना चाहूंगा कि सरकार के हाथ तो बड़े लम्बे हैं। यह जो मर गये हैं, इनके लिए कम से कम एक लाख कर दिया जाए—इनके परिवार वालों के लिए और जो घायल हैं, उनके लिए कम से कम बीस हजार रुपया करिए। धन्यवाद।

SHRI VISHWA BANDHU GUPTA: (Mr. Vice-Chairman,) Sir, I would like to ask a few clarifications from the hon. Minister. Sir, the question is to find out the cause of the fire. But I would also like to know whether modern methods were employed to put out the fire quickly. I would also like to know whether the hon. Minister had considered and whether he has arrangements for employing fire-fighting measures by helicopters, because it is a difficult and a spcialised job to put out a fire of gasolene, toluene and benzene. So, I would like to know whether a specialised method was used and whether some methods of that type exist. Secondly, Sir, I would like to know whether the people who are working in the refinery have been trained to meet such emergencies like fighting fire in a specialised manner and whether there is a training programme so that the losses occurring from this kind of a thing are minimised. Sir, this benzene and toluene are mainly used, I told, in the textile and detergent industries. Now, we have had a very heavy loss of Rs. 150 lakhs and supplies have been disrupted. I would like to know whether it is likely to affect any of these detergents or the products which are being used by the textile industry.

My fourth point is, what is the system of fire warning? Is there an early warning system in the entire refinery system so that we have in the Petroleum Ministry a very quick information to be conveyed to the Central Control Tower and be able to take effective steps quickly in such emergency?

श्री हरि सिंह (उत्तर प्रदेश): मान्यवर, यह बम्बई की रिफाइनरी में आग की बड़ी दर्दनाक घटना हुई और 36 के करीब आदमियों की जानें गईं। यह एक विशेष तरह की आग होती है जिसका किसी आग से मुकाबला नहीं किया जा सकता। मेरी जानकारी में आया है कि मथुरा में भी आग लगी और यहां पर भी और दोनों जगहों पर आदमियों की जानें गयी हैं और इस विशेष प्रकार की आग के लिए विशेष प्रकार की ट्रेनिंग होनी चाहिये तो मैं माननीय मंत्री जी से यह जानना चाहता हूं कि आपका जो आग बुझाने का स्टाफ है वह कहां से ऐसी ट्रेनिंग पाता है ? क्या इसके लिए आपकी कोई ऐसी संस्था है जहां पर कि ऐसी आग को बुझाने की ट्रेनिंग दी जाती है ? दूसरा मैं यह पूछना चाहता हूं कि जो ठेकेदार के मजदूर मरे हैं वे सरकारी काम कर रहे थे, चाहे ठेकेदार का काम

[श्री हरि सिंह]

कर रहे थे लेकिन काम तो सरकारी या पेट्रोलियम का कर रहे थे, क्या माननीय मंत्री जी ने यह तय किया है कि जो आदमी मरे है उनके किसी आश्रित लड़के को या उसकी वाइफ को अपने इस विभाग में नौकरी देंगे या नहीं देंगे ? तीसरे, मैं यह जानना चाहता हूं कि यह आग लगने पर इसे बुझाने का काम तो इन रिफाइनरीज में या पेट्रोलियम विभाग में होता रहेगा क्योंकि जों-ज्यों काम बढ़ेगा त्यों-त्यों ऐसी घटनाएं बढ़ती रहेंगी, तो यह जो स्टाफ है उसके द्वारा इसके लिए कितने मौब-फायरिंग के रिहर्सल किए गए थे, यह मै माननीय मंत्री जी से जानना चाहता हूं ?

SHR N. E. BALARAM: I would like to make one observation before I ask my question. Government should learn a lesson from these most unfortunate accidents and see that proper preventive, devices are there in all the sophisticated industries. That is my first observation because after reading the Minister's statement, I feel something is wrong there, even at the level of management. The fire first occured at the loading area and then it spread to some other areas and they were trying to extinguish the fire. The most unfortunate thing is that on receipt of information, Government deputed the Chief of the Safety Directorate under the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural gas to assist in extinguishing the fire. It is a wonderful statement that the Government of India instructed the Chief of the Safety Directorate who is operating there, to go and extinguish the fire. I do not know what is the coordination there. There is a Safety Directorate; there is a Chief Officer, and there is a fire nearby. Do you have to send a communication to that gentleman to go and extinguish fire? I don't know what it is. What is his job then? There is no management or vigilance against such occurrences at all. So something wrong is there. Government should learn a lesson from it and make all arrangements to see that preventive measures against fire are properly maintained in such sophisticated industry. I do not know whether such a system exists in all sophisticated industries. I would like the Minister to answer and we are anxious to know it from him.

SHRI BRAHM DUTT: I share the sentiments of the hon. Members and I assure them that while making the statement, I was also concerned and I tried to put before the House all information that was available to us. Certain points have been raised, very relevant points have been raised. The hon. Member who spoke last made the point that we must learn a lesson from this. Yes, of course. I agree that we must learn a lesson from such tragedies so that such tragedies do not occur again and again.

Sir, I will be summarising the points raised. First of all, we do not think there is sabotage of any type. We do not think so.

The second point which has been made is—this is an important point—about the impartiality of the enquiry committee. We have a safety directorate in the oil industry. It is not related to a particular company. They have the special job of looking after the various installations ,of carrying out safety audits safety drills etc. As far as the constitution of this committee is concerned, Chairman is the Executive Director. There are three members. One is the Advisor (Refineries) in the Ministry. The second member is the Chief Controller of Explosive because this accident comes under that category. We have also included, as the third member, the Fire Advisor to the Government of India, in the Ministry of Home Affairs. Therefore, I do not think there can be any doubt about the impartiality of this committee. We hope that they will go into the causes and also suggest remedial measures.

I do not want to comment on the likely causes because this is the work of the enquiry committee. I will not encroach upon their rights. I do not want to influence them.

A question has been raised whether all of them were contract labourers. I have said that forty-six people were working there and two of them were regular employees. When I made the statement in the

Lok Sabha the death toll was 30. The statement was prepared on that day. You might remember that I corrected it. The death toll now is 31.

It has been asked whether we are maintaining the standards which should be maintained. Of course, in the oil industry—it is my personal knowledge—we try to maintain high standards of safety. We attach lot of importance to safety. I will give an example. Recently I visited the bottling plants in Kashmir. The first thing I did was, I asked them to start the fire-fighting equipment. Within a minute it was started. Therefore, we do instal such equipment. We do not worry about the cost of installation. These things are not twenty-five years old. We try to instal whatever latest things available. And we will not hesitate to instal whatever is suggested by the enquiry committee. We are aware that ours is a hazardous industry. But I beg to submit that in spite of all these things, such tragedies occur. We should make all attempts to prevent such tragedies.

Sir, safety measures are periodically reviewed. Safety audits are carried out. Safety drills are carried out. We have adequate, trained, manpower in each of the installations, whether it is refinery or platform or bottling plant.

A question has been asked why I sent an officer to assist. I was travelling in a train. Early morning, at 4 a.m., I was informed of the fire. Immediately I asked if the safety directorate had sent a senior officer to assist. I was also to visit the place but I thought that they should do the preliminary work.

Now, about compensation. The amount which we have announced, Rs. 10,000 and Rs. 5,000, is only *ex-gratia* which is given on the spot. The kith and kin of 29 out of the 46 persons have already received it and we will ensure that whatever is due in the Workmens' Compensation Act will be given. I assure that we will not try to reduce it and we will not try to miserly about it. So, this *ex-gratia* payment is an addition to the amount which has to be paid under the Workmen's Compensation Act. I have said in my statement that the crude distillation column is expected to be operated on 16th November, but it was started yesterday and today it is functioning.

The other point that has been made is whether we are looking after the people who have been admitted into hospital. I assure the hon. Members that I share the concern and I have specificially directed that the BPCL should themselves look after the patients who have been admitted. No effort will be spared to save their lives. They are being looked after and we have no complaints whether anybody is being neglected.

One hon. Member asked, what will be the impact of this fire on Benzene and Toluene? We have made an alternative arrangement for the supply of this material because BPCL is not the only source of supply. IOC's another refinery has got them. We are making all the efforts to meet the demand and there will be no adverse effect on the market.

In the end, let me summarise that most uptodate equipment has been installed in the refinery and whatever else is suggested by anybody will be installed here. We will consult the topmost experts. If they suggest any other thing we will not spare any effort or money to instal the same.

SHRI VISHWA BANDHU GUPTA: What about the use of helicopters?

SHRI BRAHM DUTT: The helicopters are used when the fire is very high. Here foam is used and it was used. Unfortunately, it seems that gantry area which is outside the refinery did not have the same safety arrangements. That I will personally ensure, I will go there and see that the safety arrangements are made available there.

श्री अश्विनी कुमार : माननीय उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदय, मैं एक प्रश्न पूछना चाहूंगा । मंत्री महोदय ने बताया कि दो व्यक्ति थे जोकि कंपनी के थे, बाकी सारे

[श्री अश्विनी कुमार]

कांट्रेक्ट लेबर थे । अब जो घायल हुये हैं उसमें कंपनी के घायल हुये हैं या कांट्रेक्ट लेबर हुये हैं ?

उपसभाध्यक्ष (श्री हेच. हनुमनत-पा) वह उस स्टेटमेंट में है। आप उसे पढ़िये।

श्री अश्विनी कुमार : दूसरे जो कांट्रेक्ट लेबर हैं क्या उनके ऊपर वर्कमेंस कम्पनसेशन एक्ट लगेगा और उसके मुताबिक आप कितना धन देने जा रहे हैं ? इस बारे में आप सदन को कानफिडेंस में ले सकें तो मैं आभारी होऊंगा ।

श्री ब्रह्म दत्त : महोदय, वर्कमेन कम्पनसेशन एक्ट तो हर प्रकार के कर्मचारियों और श्रमिकों पर एप्लाय होता है और जब मैं यह कह चुका हूं कि उसमें ज्यादा-से-ज्यादा एमाउंट हम देंगे । अब यह तो पता नहीं है कि उसमें 60 हजार, 70 हजार या 80 हजार है लेकिन इतना मैं विश्वास दिला सकता हूं कि जो सजेस्ट किया जाएगा उसमें एक पैसे की भी कमी नहीं करने का मैंने आश्वासन दिया है ।

SHRI CHITTA BASU: What about the contract system itself? We have made out a point that a large number of employees are being employed under contract labour system. Are you going to examine the problem and do away with the system by itself?

SHRI BRAHM DUTT: This question has nothing to do with this accident. It is a very general question and we have to maintain the cost effectiveness and efficiency of the public sector undertakings. Contract labour will have to be employed somewhere but in the areas where it should not be employed we will examine the whole thing. Wherever regular labour can be employed and regular labour is required to be employed, we will do that.

SHRI GHULAM RASOOL MATTO: Consider the question of group insurance for the labour.

श्री हरिसिंह : महोदय, जिन लोगों की जानें चली गईं उनके लड़के-बच्चों या पत्नी को भारत पेट्रोलियम में पर्मानेंट नौकरी देंगे?

श्री ब्रह्म दत्त : महोदय, माननीय सदस्य को ज्ञात होना चाहिये कि वहां पर नौकरी देने का सिस्टम नहीं है । हमारे यहां इंडिक्वेट कम्पनसेशन देने का सिस्टम है ।

ALLOCATION OF TIME FOR DISPOSAL OF GOVERNMENT AND OTHER BUSINESS

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI H. HANUMANTHAPPA): I have to inform Members that the Business Advisory Committee at its meeting held today, the 17th November, 1988, allotted time for Government legislative and other business as follows:

BUSINESS	*TIME ALLOTTED*
1. Consideration and passing of the Commission of Inquiry (Amendment) Bill, 1988, as passed by the Lok Sabha.	2 hours
2. Discussion on the National Housing Policy.	3 hours

WAREHOUSING CORPORATION (AMENDMENT) BILL, 1987——Contd.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI H. HANUMANTHAPPA): We shall now take up further consideration of the Warehousing Corporations (Amendment) Bill, 1987. Shri Matto.

SHRI SUKOMAL SEN (*West Bengal*): It is nearing six o'clock.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI H. HANUMANTHAPPA): Only two speakers are left. You were present in the Business Advisory Committee meeting. You agree to something there and question it here.

SHRI GHULAM RASOOL MATTO (Jammu and Kashmir): I rise to support